



What Expectations Do Young Adults With Autism Spectrum Disorders And Their Families Have For The Transition into Adulthood?

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Research Question —Are the expectations for adulthood different for young adults with autism? Do they want the same options for adulthood that other young adults desire? What can professionals and programs do to ensure that they have a successful transition into adulthood?

Methodology— Interviews were conducted by the researcher with young adults and their parents. A series of questions related to work, independent living, recreation and relationships were presented to the interviewees. A review of records was used to triangulate the data.



Subjects

- 4 young men
 - Ages 20-21 years old
 - 3 have primary diagnoses of Autism Spectrum Disorders, 1 has intellectual disabilities as the primary diagnosis and also has ASD
- 3 moms and 1 set of parents

Sample Questions

- Can you figure out how to solve a problem without help?
- How do you make friends?
- Do you know what to do if there is an emergency?
- What do you like to do in your free time?
- Did you help write your IEP goals?
- What do you want to do when you finish school?
- Where will you live when you finish school?
- Do you take care of your own money?
- How do you make important decisions?

Hopes and Dreams

- Taking college classes
- Becoming a DJ
- Getting married
- Driving a car
- Getting an expensive computer for work
- Getting a job
- Traveling
- Moving to another state or country
- Living as independently as possible away from family
- Genuine friendships and relationships with people w/ & w/out disabilities

Fears and concerns

- Not having genuine friendships and relationships
- Not having the experiences of a “typical” young adult
- Not having a meaningful job
- Not knowing what to do to keep himself safe in an emergency and from exploitation
- Ignoring an emergency or a medical need
- Not becoming an independent adult
- Who will look after him when we are gone

What can professionals do to improve the outcome?

- Help to build genuine relationships –going beyond benevolence
- Build communication skills and communication avenues
- Seamlessly transition to a job or college/vocational training
- Ensure that academic expectations are real and not “Watered Down”
- Help build support systems for families and young adults
- Encourage individuals out of their “Comfort Zone”
- Provide families with clear information about available services
- Work on goal setting and self-advocacy skills

